

PRODUCTS

Dry-Glaze Glass Rail System

Tapered inserts lock glass in place

by Scott Gibson

In the Taper-Loc dry-glazed railing system from C.R. Laurence, tempered glass panels up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick are installed in the company's slotted base shoe, which can be bolted to a wood deck (or to concrete or steel) through a steel or aluminum base plate.

The system consists of a self-adhering spacer, placed along the bottom edge of the glass panel, and two thin plastic wedges, which go on the opposite side of the panel. A special tool slides over the tapers and then forces them together laterally to lock the glass in place. A torque limiter, similar to a mechanic's torque wrench, prevents the installer from applying too much pressure and damaging the glass. Once the panel is in place, none of the pieces are visible. The tapered shims can be loosened easily if the glass panel must be removed.

The manufacturer says the Taper-Loc system has passed muster in Miami-Dade County, Fla., which has



the most stringent wind-load requirements in the country. It also meets requirements of the International Building Code.

By eliminating grout to set the glass, the system speeds up installation by 50 percent, the company says. Pricing depends on the type of base shoe and the intended glass type.

Scott Gibson is a writer in East Waterboro, Maine.

■ **C.R. Laurence**, 800/421-6144, crlaurence.com.

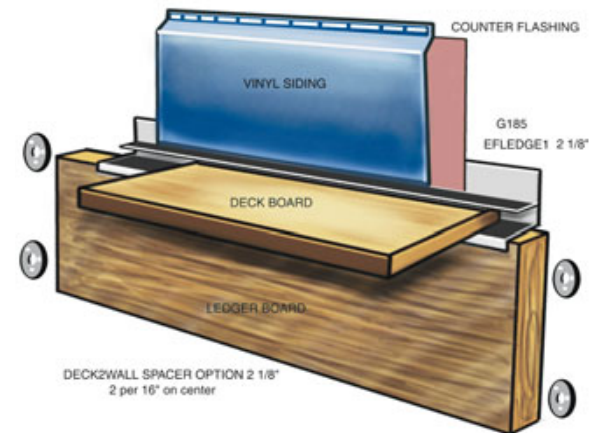
Flashing for Decks

Keep water out and improve appearance

Flashing is flashing, right? Not necessarily. Mark Morsching, who owns a Minnesota construction company and has seen his share of problem decks, has come up with a new flashing profile he claims does a better job of keeping water where it belongs.

Morsching developed flashing for use on deck perimeters and at the ledger. Both versions have an extra flange of material that should be more effective at blocking water than conventional flashing profiles. The perimeter flashing prevents water from seeping between fascia and structural framing, which should extend the life of the deck. At the same time, any movement of the fascia and deck boards caused by changes in moisture and temperature is hidden by the flashing, maintaining a neater appearance. The ledger flashing (shown), Morsching says, prevents wind-driven rain from being pushed up the wall, while hiding any dimensional movement in decking next to the house.

Both versions are available in Galvalume, G185



galvanized steel, stainless steel, and aluminum, in 11 colors to complement most composite decking. The flashing comes in standard 10-foot lengths but can be shipped in 8-foot sections and custom made to any length a builder needs.

Expect to pay about \$1.70 per foot. Stainless steel costs somewhat more. — S.G.

■ **Everflashing**, 800/550-1667, everflashing.com.

Fly-Ash Composite Decking

No wood and a Class A fire rating

Composite decking made from recycled ingredients like wood flour and plastic is an environmental success story, as it keeps those materials out of landfills and lasts a long time. But the wood content is an inherent weakness that can make composites susceptible to mold and color fade.

A California company says it's found a way to beat those problems — by eliminating the wood flour. LifeTime Composites manufactures its decking, LifeTime Lumber, by extruding a mixture of fly ash and urethane. Fly ash is a by-product of coal-burning power plants, and the United States produces millions of tons of the stuff every year. It can be recycled into a variety of products, including concrete, bricks, and tile — and now decking.

According to the company, LifeTime Lumber doesn't have to be painted or stained and can be worked with conventional tools. It's available in two versions, one of which has a Class A fire rating. The manufacturer says it's made from 65 percent recycled materials, is chemically inert, and off-gases no volatile organic compounds, all of which help it earn credits under the LEED rating system.

The decking comes in 5/4x6 and 2x6 dimensions, for 16-inch and



24-inch on-center joist spacing, respectively. LifeTime says the material doesn't expand or contract with changes in temperature, although a gap of 1/8 inch is recommended for end-to-end as well as side-to-side spacing.

Like other composites, LifeTime is not rated for use as a structural element. It can be installed with either hot-dipped galvanized or stainless steel screws and also can be nailed. No predrilling is required. Scraps can be discarded in regular municipal waste but should not be burned.

Decking comes in lengths of 12, 16, and 20 feet and in two colors, brown and gray. Standard decking costs between \$2.50 and \$2.70 a lineal foot; fire-rated decking is \$3.20 to \$3.40 per foot. One more bonus: It's about 25 percent lighter in weight than most wood-plastic composites. — S.G. ❖

■ **LifeTime Composites,**
877/285-4338, ltime.com.